

## Child Development: Learning Styles or Multiple Intelligences

### Introduction

We learn to do things in different ways. Think about it. How do we learn song lyrics? We hear, we feel, we repeat. If you are good at sports you watched, you imitated, you felt. If you are a good counselor or teacher you listen with your heart not just your ears; you like people and you learn from and with them. As adults, each of us “knows” certain things and we are skilled at certain things. If you think about it, there are some things you will never be good at. You won’t be able to “know” it like your friend, who is an expert. Besides innate talent, some of our differences come from the fact that we have different ways of learning and knowing. Or as Howard Gardner, a well known and recognized educator and psychologist explains it—we have Multiple Intelligences. This segment is meant to help you reflect on different modes of learning styles, and give you some helpful tips to use with young people. Just follow the outline. Begin by reflecting or journaling on the *first question*. Then read the article “Multiple Intelligences” and jot down your responses to the *reflection questions*.

### First Question

How do you best learn something?

### Article: Multiple Intelligences

Read the following article and respond to the questions:

The theory of Multiple Intelligences suggests that we each have varying degrees of different intelligences or ways of learning that we refine as we get older. Gardner names eight of them. The eight intelligences work together to make each person's own distinct combination of intelligences and learning styles. They are listed in the chart below, along with corresponding abilities and teaching suggestions for the different abilities.

On the page below is the list of Gardner's eight intelligences and the abilities associated with each, along with some suggestions for using them to teach:

<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Abilities</b>	<b>Teaching Suggestions</b>
<b>Verbal/Linguistic</b>	Learns languages, writing, reading, and speaking	Use stories, poems, word puzzles, riddles, written explanations, writing activities.
<b>Logical/Mathematical</b>	Solves problems logically, scientifically and mathematically	Use timelines, the Liturgical calendar and seasons, in older children comparisons and analyses of case studies.
<b>Musical</b>	Creates, appreciates, and performs music, recognizes rhythm, tone, and pitch	Use music, songs, simple instruments.
<b>Body/Kinesthetic</b>	Coordinates body movement; will learn best by doing	Use sacred gestures, Liturgical dance, movement (e.g. Stations of the Cross, echo pantomimes, movement games and activities).
<b>Visual/Spatial</b>	Recognizes patterns, appreciates images, color, and shapes	Use icons, pictures, statues, pictures in child's text, art activities.
<b>Environmental/Natural</b>	Recognizes and appreciates objects and events in the natural world	Create environments, prayer corner or a ritual to create an environment, use nature examples in teaching, assign outdoor activities.
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Understands and communicates effectively with others	Do shared and spontaneous prayer, group activities, work in pairs, social action projects with people.
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	Understands one's own feelings and motivations	Use reflective exercises, guided meditation, journaling, imagination activities, silent meditation.

We know from our own experience that everyone does not learn the same way. That goes for young people, too. It is important to plan lessons that include uses of multiple intelligences to best accommodate each child in your group. Do not rely on one method. Observe the activities that seem to engage the children's attention. Offer alternative activities, for example, "You may draw a picture of \_\_\_\_\_ or write a paragraph or word map." Be aware that what works well with one child or one group may not work with the next one. When you plan your sessions using methods and activities that capture the interest of young people, it will make a difference and leave them with good memories of their catechetical sessions. It also motivates them to come back.

### Reflection Questions

- What intelligence styles do you most use as a catechist?
- Name two ways you will incorporate this theory into your sessions?